

C-200 • ISSUE No. 3

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THE POCKET  BOOK

Magazine

**THE SEXUAL FAILURE OF
THE BEAUTIFUL WOMAN**

ADOLESCENTS

in Mutiny

YALTA

by Alger Hiss

▶ See back cover for additional stimulating features.

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THE POCKET BOOK

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YALTA: MODERN AMERICAN MYTH

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By Alger Hiss

AMERICA, lacking its own medieval and classical mythology, has compensated by creating rather more than its share of latter-day myths. Pocahontas, Ponce de Leon, Paul Bunyan, Barbara Frietchie, and dozens more—each period of our history and each region has its legendary figures. Tales of witchcraft in colonial New England have vied for popular favor with legends of piratical brutishness on the Spanish Main.

It is the nature of fables and myths to transcend facts. They are expressions of mood rather than accounts of historical events. The Yalta Myth has arisen in the post-war decade, ten years filled with fears that gradually replaced the purposiveness with which we had faced the Great Depression and the Axis powers. Among the sources of our fears has been the recognition that as a nation we have not been notably successful at fashioning strong and tranquil relations with the other peoples of the war-torn world. The times have been fertile for visions of hobgoblins. A menacing outer world can readily be peopled in the fearful imagination with demons and wicked sorcerers.

THE Yalta Legend has it that there a failing President, incompetently or malevolently advised, betrayed stricken Poland and our ally China. Soviet ascendancy in Eastern Europe has been dismaying to many Americans, not least to those of Polish, Czech, and Slovak descent. The swift and stunning collapse of our China policy has disturbed still other large segments of our people. A devil theory, personifying the forces which thwart and confound, is easier to absorb than rational, comprehensive exposition and solution of the discontents that plague the globe. The legend explains the vast social upheavals of Europe and Asia as resulting from the faltering or cynical appeasement of Stalin by Roosevelt—as though the two leaders, like the Olympians of much earlier Greek myths, could dispose of nations and peoples.

YALTA PARTICIPANTS STILL HEROES

The Yalta Conference, held from February 4 to February 11 in the year 1945 on the semitropical Black Sea coast of the Crimean peninsula, was attended by a host of Western statesmen and soldiers. Ironically, most of the participants remain heroes to the ambivalent perpetrators of the Yalta Myth.

Sir Winston Churchill was the chief promoter of the Conference. James F. Byrnes, one-time Senator, Justice of the Supreme Court, and Secretary of State, more recently a staunch champion of the older American myth of white supremacy, was a senior member of the American delegation. So was Fleet Admiral William D. Leahy, the salty and sceptical sailor. Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., was Secretary of State, and W. Averell Harriman, Am-

bassador to Moscow. General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff; Fleet Admiral Ernest King, Chief of Naval Operations; and Major General John R. Deane, at the time chief of our military mission in Moscow, were also at Yalta. The twentieth-century twin passions for memoirs and Congressional investigations have ensured full accounts by the major heroes. Each of these participants has written, or testified, at length as to the actual course of events at Yalta. Each told of the Conference within a few years after it had taken place. Each buttressed his memory by reference to official records and personal memoranda and diaries (Mr. Byrnes, a former court reporter, relied also on his verbatim shorthand notes). None gives even slight support to the legend's refrain that Poland and China were "sold down the river." The private papers of Harry Hopkins (no hero to the Yalta romancers) have also been published: his account jibes with that of the other participants.

ACCORDING TO Sir Winston and to Admiral Leahy, some seven hundred other Americans and Britons went to Yalta. Neither our relentless journalists nor our inquisitive legislators have brought from this host of privates, noncoms, clerks, colonels, and generals a single item that smacks of demonology or sorcery. (The *New Yorker* enterprisingly published "That Was Yalta: Worm's-Eye View" by a Navy lieutenant junior grade. This account of the staffing, housing, and culinary arrangements was written because its author felt that all the other American participants "have had their say about what went on there.")

These voluminous and authoritative reports of the

Yalta Conference have been available for some years, with no restraining effect upon the lush growth of the Yalta Myth. Since it so patently feeds in pastures of fantasy remote from fact, the Myth may even survive the release this March by the State Department of the entire official record in two volumes totaling approximately 500,000 words. Within less than twenty-four hours the Scripps-Howard editorial response to this (surely unread) vast corpus of minutes and memoranda was firmly faithful to the cherished Fable: "The Yalta Story, a Pandora's Box." Many other papers were equally prompt in displaying their obliviousness to recorded fact: "Giveaway," "A Witch's Brew," "Sorry Record" were repeated, along with the main theme of the Legend: that Yalta had contrived a "sellout" of Poland and China.

There are cynics who think that the myth-makers of Washington were well aware that history and legend move by separate paths. The suggestion is that the recent publication of the enormous Yalta record was designed as an editorial act of massive retaliation against the Democratic successes of 1954, the mere further public mention of Yalta being calculated to raise again the dread specters associated with it. The *New York Times*, restrained as is its wont, ascribes the release of the Yalta record to the appeal the Yalta Legend has long had: first, for the "many powerful Republicans" who have felt it essential to win "the minority nationality groups in the large northern cities"; second, for "the Republican supporters of the Chinese Nationalists." Repudiation of the Yalta agreements was, indeed, a plank in the Republican platform of 1952.

A MYTH ONLY IN THE UNITED STATES

There is another unusual aspect of the Myth: It is of exclusively American origin and, at least until March of this year, its circulation has also been restricted to the United States.

YALTA brought together as notable a gathering of Western warriors and statesmen as have assembled since Roland's horn belatedly summoned Charlemagne's host back to Roncesvalles. The Yalta decisions affected the entire globe. Yet the impulse to legend has been felt only in our country. The lack of imaginative response in other lands is the more striking because other peoples would seem to have had more compelling grounds than we to praise or pillory the historic meeting.

France was not invited to Yalta, a blunt recognition of her temporary prostration. De Gaulle, the embodiment of wounded nationalistic pride, bitterly resented Yalta's exclusiveness. Yet his followers have never seized upon this slight as an outward symbol to be blamed for inward malaise. In France, Yalta means just another in the long list of diplomatic conferences.

In England, too, there has apparently been no popular audience for an epic defaming the most dramatic gathering of the great figures of World War II. Under the impetus of the State Department's celebration of Yalta's tenth birthday by the release for publication on St. Patrick's Day of every shred and tatter of recorded casual conversation or banquet sally, there was only *one* instance of acceptance in England of the made-in-America myth. A dispatch of March 22 to the New

York *Times* noted that the words "Traitor of Yalta" had been scrawled in red oxide across the base of President Roosevelt's statue in Grosvenor Square. But otherwise Britons have been as cool to Yaltan flights of fancy as have other non-American peoples.

Even the embattled Formosan adherents of Chiang Kai-shek, chief "victims" in the Yalta Myth, have felt no urge to invent a Saga of Shame about the conference. True, their spokesmen when talking to Americans have from time to time displayed customary Oriental courtesy by employing some of the clichés of the Yalta Story. But one senses that these instances prove only their close familiarity with the American idiom and folkways. There is no indication that the Myth has rooted in the tropical soil of Taiwan.

YALTA PRAISED

One further peculiar characteristic of the Yalta Tale of Terror is that it grew perversely from the great initial popularity of the Yalta Conference in the United States. A nearly unanimous hymn of praise was the original response to the agreements reached at Yalta.

For reasons of military secrecy in wartime, no mention was made until later of the Far Eastern agreement, which provided among other things for Russia's entry into the war against Japan. However, when the Far Eastern arrangements became known a few months later, they, too, were universally praised.

THE FIRST press comment on the accords of Yalta appeared on February 13, 1945, while the participants were still returning home. The New York *Times* con-

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cluded its joyful analysis: "This conference marks a milestone on the road to victory and peace." The New York *Herald-Tribune* found that "the whole which emerges is self-consistent, is rational, and affords a firm foundation upon which all together can advance to the next stages of the immense task before us." Published surveys of the rest of the nation's press showed that the great majority of newspaper comment was similarly jubilant in tone. *Time Magazine*, after "a few days to ponder the results of Yalta," said that when compared with Versailles "Yalta looked good."

In Congress, Senator Vandenberg was quoted as calling the communiqué "by far the best that has issued from any major conference." Senator White of Maine thought "our world will be a better and happier one because of the agreement reached at the Conference." Further afield, Herbert Hoover, according to the *Times*, gave "enthusiastic endorsement" and found it "fitting" that the announcement of the Conference results had come on Lincoln's Birthday.

There were, of course, dissents. Leaders of the Polish-American Association gave first voice to phrases that were later to become embedded in the Myth: Roosevelt and Churchill, they said, were "traitors to the cause of world democracy." The Polish Government in Exile refused to "recognize" the provisions relating to Poland's boundaries and governmental structure. The Chicago *Tribune* and the Scripps-Howard papers were reserved in tone to the point of coolness. But they were not symbolic of large-scale inarticulate resentment. The opposition was ticked off by a *Herald-Tribune* cartoon a week after the first announcements. With the aid of

a magnifying glass, "The 100% or Nothing Critics" triumphantly announced upon a minute inspection of the agreements: "Just as I suspected! A misspelled word!" Uncle Sam looked on with tolerant amusement.

WHEN IN August the Russians, as they had promised, entered the war against Japan and the terms of the Far Eastern arrangements made at Yalta became known in connection with new Sino-Soviet agreements, the response continued to be enthusiastically favorable. On August 29, 1945, Raymond Moley wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* that "a careful examination of the [Chinese-Soviet] treaty and collateral agreements, now made public, suggests that Chiang gained far more than he conceded . . . The present arrangements are much more advantageous to China than were those [with Czarist Russia] of 50 years ago. . . ." The *New York Times* a day earlier had characterized the Sino-Soviet agreements as "A victory for peace as great as any scored on the battlefield . . . they fulfill all the requirements of both the United Nations Charter . . . and of the Cairo Declaration. . . ." The *Christian Science Monitor* thought that "The Chinese-Russian treaty must be a great disappointment to the prophets of doom. . . . The prestige of Chungking is greatly enhanced by this treaty." The Chinese benefits, the *Monitor* asserted, had been obtained "at what seems to be a very reasonable price."

On September 10, *Life Magazine*, later a primary disseminator of the Yalta Myth, declared the Chinese-Russian negotiations had brought "an agreement which was as great a victory for common sense as the defeat of

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Japan was for armed might. The Soong-Stalin treaties contain less ammunition for pessimists than any diplomatic event of the last 20 years . . . the present prospects of China are a vindication of American policy in Asia for almost 50 years. . . ."

These words of praise, it must be emphasized, were written *after* the successful development and use of the atomic bomb, *after* Japan's surrender.

THE RUSSIANS MADE THE CONCESSIONS

A richly inventive imagination must have been at work in weaving the fable. An atmosphere of horror is engendered by the assertion that Roosevelt was ailing and was therefore a pliable instrument in the hands of wily Stalin and Svengali-like American advisors. (Churchill's having participated in negotiating the Yalta accords is simply ignored.) The crocodile tears for Roosevelt's health represent great ingenuity. The only facts for fiction to build upon are the President's sudden death two months after Yalta and the circumstance that to many participants at the Conference he appeared drawn and tired. But fatigue was the common condition of those who played major parts in the greatest of all wars. Death from an embolism is not normally, and was not in the case of Franklin D. Roosevelt, preceded by failing mental or physical power. Admiral McIntire, the President's physician, who was with him at Yalta, has categorically and repeatedly asserted that Mr. Roosevelt was neither mentally nor physically sick at Yalta. Admiral Leahy, who as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff saw him daily, wrote: "As we made the final preparations for the Cri-

mean Conference, I saw no sign of any serious weakness in the President's physical condition." The Admiral added in retrospect that Roosevelt's "personality had dominated the discussions." Mr. Harriman has noted that at the conference President Roosevelt negotiated "with his usual skill and perception." There is no dissent on this point from any of those who at Yalta watched the President's alert and magnificent efforts to insure victory over the Axis and to forge a sound basis for a peaceful post-war world.

THE ASSERTIONS of the Pandoran horrors loosed on the Black Sea fare no better in terms of truth. The Myth lacks the usual plausible details that lend credibility to fantasy. It relies largely upon emotion-tinged pejoratives: "appeasement" (e. g., in William C. Bullitt's retelling of the tale in *Life* for September 6, 1948), "betrayal," "treason" (these words predominate in the versions favored by members of the China Lobby and by Eastern European emigré leaders), "sellout of China and Poland" (found in all versions). Cleaned of the smudge of epithets, the Yalta Story is that unwarranted and large-scale concessions were made to the Russians which resulted in Soviet leadership in Eastern Europe and the accession of the Communists to power in China. The facts are quite otherwise.

Even the background of the Conference is uncongenial to the charge of vast unnecessary concessions. The meeting with Stalin was the result of vigorous and long-continued Anglo-American initiative in which Churchill, never noted for appeasement, took the lead. "Only a personal meeting gave hope"—Churchill has thus ex-

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pressed his conviction that to coordinate the enormous designs of the war and to propose solutions for the complexities of the eventual peace an immediate conference of the three Allied heads of government was necessary. (Roosevelt, after long consideration by British and American experts, actually chose the site, Stalin having insisted that his health and his daily responsibilities for the conduct of the Russian winter offensive prevented him from leaving Russia.) It was the British and the Americans who made all the requests for military and political decisions. These requests had received careful study. Our delegation and the British had a preconference rendezvous at Malta for the express purpose of ensuring unity in our positions—hardly a mark of open-handed largesse toward the Russians. In the very nature of things, therefore, the Russians, recipients of numerous Anglo-American proposals, made what “concessions” there were.

THE AMERICANS WERE JUBILANT

From an American point of view, the results of the Conference warranted the jubilation with which our press first hailed them. We coordinated the final military strangulation of Germany; Stalin agreed that Russia would enter the war against Japan within three months after Germany's defeat; we were granted air bases north of Vladivostok to ensure maximum bombardment of Japan, and other bases in Hungary from which to press our air attacks against Germany. General Marshall beamed as he waited for the car that took him from Yalta, saying with evident satisfaction that, though as Chief of Staff he was much too busy to be attending

conferences, for what we had obtained he would have been willing to remain for months.

In the political field Anglo-American initiative won Soviet acceptance of the United Nations Great Power voting formula drafted in Washington the preceding autumn with the approval of Senator Vandenberg and other Congressional leaders. The full American plan for inaugurating the United Nations, with all the Latin American countries (save Argentina, whose admission we did not then desire) as charter members, was agreed to. Stalin acceded to the restoration of France and China as great powers; he accepted a declaration drafted by the State Department that announced the policies to be followed in the liberated countries of Europe. Secretary of State Stettinius published a tabulation of concessions made at this Conference where Churchill and Roosevelt were "the men who came to dinner." It "shows clearly that the Soviet Union made greater concessions . . . than were made to them." Mr. Byrnes, later Secretary of State, put it: "A realistic conclusion is that the war agreements gave the Soviet Union very little that they were not in a position to take without agreement."

THE MYTH has it that Poland was "given away." The Red Army had driven the Nazis from Poland and had occupied it as thoroughly as we were to complete our occupation of the Philippines a few weeks later. We could no more "give" Poland to the Russians than they could "give" the Philippines to us. We and the British did *seek* a Western form of government for Poland. In this we succeeded only partially and later

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those partial successes were wiped out as the Cold War liquidated these and other East-West compromises.

Churchill and Roosevelt, who was acting on advice from the State Department, agreed to the establishment of the Curzon Line as Poland's eastern boundary. This boundary had been fixed by the Allies of World War I as the fair ethnic frontier between Russia and Poland. Marshal Pilsudski refused to accept the Allies' proposal and attacked Bolshevik Russia, succeeding by force in extending Polish territory into lands inhabited largely by Byelorussians and Ukrainians.

Arthur Krock, at the time on vacation with "opportunity for deliberate reflection," wrote a week after Yalta that its results "contained no surprises . . . the commitments made therein were either foregone conclusions or belated acceptances of suggestions which were obviously necessary when first offered. An example of the unsurprising statements was that the executive branch of the United States Government, through the President, accepts the Curzon Line in substance as Poland's reasonable eastern boundary." And in compensation for the adoption of the Curzon Line in the east it was agreed that Poland should receive western lands from Germany.

CHINA NOT BETRAYED

Still more baldly contrary to fact is the other main burden of the Myth: that China, too, was "betrayed" and its territory "given away" in its absence. At the time of Yalta the Joint Chiefs of Staff estimated that it would take eighteen months after the surrender of Germany to defeat Japan. Our objectives included

landings in Japan proper, for which Secretary Stimson estimated we would need five million men of whom a million would be casualties. In a memorandum of January 23, 1945, prepared for the Yalta Conference, the Joint Chiefs stated: "Russia's entry at as early a date as possible consistent with her ability to engage in offensive operations is necessary to provide maximum assistance to our Pacific operations." In particular the Russians were counted on to pin down and defeat the theretofore unengaged Kwantung Army, crack Japanese troops stationed in Manchuria. Throughout 1944 Ambassador Harriman took up with Stalin "on a number of occasions" this deeply desired goal of Soviet entry into the Far Eastern war.

AT YALTA Stalin agreed to attack Japan within three months after the defeat of Germany. In turn Churchill and Roosevelt endorsed Soviet claims: to the return of southern Sakhalin (taken by Japan in the Russo-Japanese war); to the Kurile Islands (which connect northern Japan with the Soviet peninsula of Kamchatka and which, initially penetrated by both countries, had been Japanese since 1875); to recognition of existing Soviet hegemony in Outer Mongolia; to the lease of Port Arthur as a naval base; to the preeminence of Soviet commercial interests in Dairen, which was to be made a free port; and to joint Sino-Soviet operation of the Manchurian railways which connect Russia with Dairen. (The commercial and leasehold rights relating to the two ports and the railways had also been taken from Russia by Japan.) These were the Soviet conditions for entering the war against a foe we regarded as capable

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of inflicting upon us a million casualties in the course of our planned invasion of the home islands. Admiral Leahy has written that these requests "seemed very reasonable to me . . . and no one was more surprised than I to see those conditions . . . labeled as some horrendous concessions . . . to an enemy."

It was expressly stipulated that the provisions affecting China would "require concurrence of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek," though Roosevelt felt certain enough of that concurrence to agree that the Soviet claims "shall be unquestionably fulfilled after Japan has been defeated." This certainty was warranted. At the Cairo Conference, more than a year before Yalta, Roosevelt had talked with Chiang about Russia's interest in warm-water ports, and Chiang had agreed that Dairen be internationalized as a free port. Roosevelt knew further that Chiang wanted to negotiate a permanent understanding with Russia.

FAR FROM "betraying" Chiang or China, the "Yalta understanding," as Mr. Harriman says, "provided a framework for negotiations between the Soviet Union and the Chinese Nationalist Government . . . These negotiations culminated in the Sino-Soviet agreements of August 1945 . . . welcome [as we have already seen] both in China and in the United States." It appears from Ambassador Hurley's cables that within two or three weeks after Yalta, Chiang on his own initiative had brought up all the points affecting China that had been agreed to at Yalta. (President Roosevelt after his return had informed the Chinese Ambassador of these points.)

Considerably larger Russian claims were, indeed, quite generally anticipated. On February 4, 1945, the day the Yalta Conference began, C. L. Sulzberger wrote to the *New York Times* from Ankara that the Turks "believe that the Big Three are meeting somewhere in the Black Sea area . . . the discussions may center on the Pacific War. It has been widely reported that at the Teheran Conference Premier Stalin promised . . . [to] join the war against Japan. . . . Furthermore, it is thought likely that Premier Stalin would like some quid pro quo, including perhaps recognition of the Soviet Union's special interests in portions of Manchuria, southern Sakhalin Island and Korea."

When President Truman on June 9 and June 14, 1945, informed T. V. Soong, then Premier of China, of the full Yalta arrangements, Soong expressed gratification and went promptly to Moscow for direct negotiations. Mr. Harriman, who kept in close touch with Soong during these negotiations, says: "At no time did Soong give me any indication that he felt the Yalta understanding was a handicap. . . ." For reasons of his own, and against Harriman's advice, Soong on several points went beyond the terms of the Yalta arrangement in granting concessions. In particular he gave the Soviet Union a lease of half the port of Dairen, though the Yalta agreement called merely for internationalizing the port. Ambassador Hurley on August 16 reported Chiang's general satisfaction with the treaty.

THERE WAS no "betrayal" of Chiang. Roosevelt furthered Chiang's interests by laying the basis for a treaty which Chiang greatly desired for the enhanced do-

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mestic and international prestige that it gave him. No Chinese territory was given away. On the contrary, Manchuria was restored to China. In 1931 Japan had forcibly seized control of all Manchuria, designating it in 1932 as the "independent" state of Manchukuo. Yalta expressly provided for recognition of China's sovereignty over Manchuria. Mr. Harriman, whose knowledge of the far Eastern aspects of the Yalta agreements is more complete than that of anyone else now living, says succinctly: "Nothing that was done at Yalta contributed to the loss of control over China by Chiang Kai-shek."

THE MYTH of Yalta, related only in name to the historical event it purports to recount, has served for a decade to frighten unwary Americans with the Gobble-uns that'll git you ef you don't vote right. Its destructive ghosts will be laid only as the American public learns again to face the problems of the real world with rationality and fortitude. We will then not be lured to confusion and panic by fanciful dark tales of duplicity and greed. For there will be no inner terror to project outward as demons and monsters. Once again our folk tales will celebrate valor and integrity.